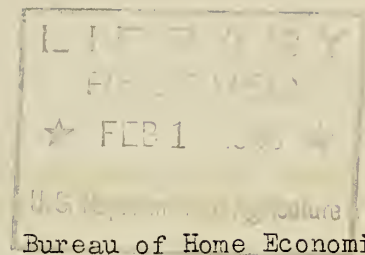


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## JUDGING FABRIC QUALITY

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, January 9, 1940, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

--ooOoo--

WALLACE KADDERLY:

And now swinging into our regular Tuesday schedule, here's Ruth Van Deman back with us to give the news from the Bureau of Home Economics. Ruth, the Farm and Home Hour is yours, to do with as you like.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Gracious, that's quite a responsibility.

KADDERLY:

I mean yours to do with as you like for the next few minutes.

VAN DEMAN:

That's more like it. .... But don't slide away from the microphone like that.. not until you've seen this new bulletin, anyway.

KADDERLY:

Um hum .... starting the New Year with a new bulletin.

VAN DEMAN:

Isn't it done in the best Government circles?

KADDERLY:

Certain~~lee~~lee. This looks like a very interesting subject ..... "Judging Fabric Quality." That's something I should know more about than I do.

VAN DEMAN:

It's yours for the reading.

KADDERLY:

This is quite a ritzy cover design .... all in black and white .....

VAN DEMAN:

Glad you approve. The very best bulletins are wearing black and white this winter.

KADDERLY:

And the illustrations .... they're big enough to show what they're all about, and put up in the modern style. .... For instance, these pages here with cotton, and wool, and silk, and rayon with a match touched to them. ....

VAN DEMAN:

For the burning test that is. Those small pictures alongside show the kind of ash you get from the different fibers. .... If we could only picture smell, you'd get the odor of burning hair from that small piece of wool.

(Over)

KADDERLY:

How about this synthetic wool we've been hearing about, made out of milk protein .... does that smell like sheep's wool when it burns?

VAN DEMAN:

That's an embarrassing question, Wallace. I really can't say. These new synthetics, made out of so many different things are upsetting the applecart in many directions. The old-fashioned tests don't work on them.

KADDERLY:

Then this burning test isn't always sure-fire?

VAN DEMAN:

Not if by sure-fire you mean an absolute indicator of what a fabric's made of. .... If you'll turn back there to the first page of Mrs. Morrison's bulletin. And, by the way, you see Bess Viemont Morrison's name there as the author.

KADDERLY:

The same lady who wrote the curtain bulletin, if I remember right.

VAN DEMAN:

The very same. .... I've marked a sentence or two there, maybe you'd like to read.

KADDERLY:

Here?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes .... that part underlined in red.

KADDERLY: (Reading)

"Each season brings a new crop of names for weaves, colors, finishes, fabrics, and even fibers .... It is no longer possible to pick up a fabric and tell what it's made of merely by a casual look and feel."

VAN DEMAN:

And that next if you don't mind.

KADDERLY:

"Yet today, just as to another generation when 'all-wool and yard wide' told most of the story, the person who buys a fabric wants to know what it is made of .... what service it can reasonably be expected to give .... will it hold its color .... can it be laundered or drycleaned .... is it warm or cool ... will it shrink or stretch, and, if so, how much." .... All very true.

VAN DEMAN:

And, unfortunately, few labels give all facts.

KADDERLY:

Why is it they don't?

VAN DEMAN:

Chiefly I think because manufacturers don't realize how much the people who buy their goods would like to have definite facts .... how much more intelligently they'd be able to buy if they knew more about the fabrics to start with.

KADDERLY:

And of course there's no "pure fabrics" law, as there is for foods and drugs, and cosmetics ----- with certain labels required by law.

VAN DEMAN:

No, and I don't know that there needs to be in just the same way. However, that's an open question. But if the manufacturers would get together as they've done on the shrinkage question under the auspices of the Federal Trade Commission, and follow the same rules ..... so the words on their labels would mean the same thing to everybody ..... that would help a lot.

KADDERLY:

And make their statements in plain English - not fancy make-up words that you can't even find in the dictionary.

VAN DEMAN:

I take it you like the label on your shirt to say "Preshrunk - will not shrink more than so-and-so many percent."

KADDERLY:

Yes, that means something definite. Or when I buy a tie, I like to see a label right on it - rayon, or pure-dye silk.

VAN DEMAN:

How about weighted silk?

KADDERLY:

That's all right, so long as I know it.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, some weighted silks give very good service, if they're not too heavily weighted.

By the way, Mrs. Morrison explains very clearly in this bulletin how the practice of weighting silks got started - to replace some of the sticky gum the silkworm coats his fiber with to make it stronger as he spins it. When the fibers are woven into fabric, that gum has to be "boiled off" so to speak, and of course the fabric loses some weight. So the practice of running the silk fabric through a bath of metallic salts to give it back weight and body came into vogue.

KADDERLY:

A clever way to adulterate silk, in other words.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, you might say a slick way. Heavily weighted silks often seem very luxurious and sleek to the touch.

KADDERLY:

Hasn't the Federal Trade Commission helped too, to straighten out the misleading labels on silk?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, they got the trade to adopt certain rules. And thanks to those anybody who takes the trouble to read the labels can now easily spot "pure dye" and weighted silk.



KADDERLY:

Ruth, I think this bulletin, "Judging Fabric Quality" is going to be useful to almost anybody buying any kind of fabric. I see a chapter here on rayon -- quite a long one ... and another on cotton ....

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, and one on linen. And an excellent one on woolen and worsted telling how to distinguish those two ... and something about the hair fibers.

KADDERLY:

Hair fibers?

VAN DEMAN:

Camel's hair, rabbit's hair, mohair .... yes, all kinds of hairs, and fibers, and feathers are woven into fabrics these days.

KADDERLY:

And I see the final chapter is on "Special finishes."

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, the treatments to make fabrics wrinkle resistant, and water repellent, and give them permanent stiffness, and keep them from mildewing.

KADDERLY:

On the mildew-proofing, I've noticed that exhibit the Bureau of Home Economics has on display right now down in the patio of the Administration Building of the Department. Was looking at it just the other day.

VAN DEMAN:

That's a kind of progress report on some of the research work under way in our textile laboratories - an attempt to find better, easier, more permanent ways of keeping mildew from staining shower curtains and fabrics that have to be used in a damp, warm atmosphere.

KADDERLY:

That's a very practical problem. I hope they succeed in solving it.

And now, Ruth, may I offer this new fabric bulletin to our Farm and Home friends?

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly. We might call it a New Year's present from the Bureau of Home Economics.

KADDERLY:

Good. Then, Farm and Home friends, if you want to add a new bulletin on textiles to your household libraries, here at the start of 1940, just drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for "Judging Fabric Quality."

VAN DEMAN:

We're very glad to send it to school libraries too.

KADDERLY:

Yes, I should think it would be very useful to classes studying fabrics.

I'll just repeat the title - "Judging Fabric Quality" - a new free bulletin available from the Bureau of Home Economics in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

And, Ruth Van Deman, we'll be looking for you again next Tuesday.

VAN DEMAN:

Thank you. I'll put that down on my new callendar.

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